



CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

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Telephone and Computer Phishing Scams

Bainbridge Island, WA: The Bainbridge Island Police Department (BIPD) has received multiple reports of unsolicited telephone calls and emails where the caller is offering to protect personal computers from security threats. The scammer frequently uses terms like "Windows", "Help Desk", and "Tech Support" to infer that they are from Microsoft. The caller typically tells the targeted victim that they have detected a security threat, and with your assistance they can reset or protect your computer. Microsoft does not send unsolicited email messages or make unsolicited phone calls to request personal or financial information, nor do they offer to fix computers over the phone. Microsoft advises that you delete these type of emails or hang up the telephone. If you suspect that you've responded to a phishing scam and have divulged personal or financial information, take these steps to minimize any damage and protect your identity:

- * Change your passwords or PINs for any online account you think might be compromised.
- * Place a fraud alert on your credit report (your bank or financial advisor can help you).
- * Never use links embedded in email messages to visit your bank websites or the sites of online merchants, especially if you suspect the email may be fraudulent. Always go directly to those sites using a fresh tab.
- * Close any account you know was accessed, compromised, or opened fraudulently.
- * Routinely review your bank and credit card statements monthly for unexplained charges or inquiries that you didn't initiate.
- * Consider signing up for credit report monitoring service through one of the larger credit reporting agencies (Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion). These agencies will send you an email if credit history has been researched and by whom. They will also inform you when new lines of credit are opened in your name.

Chief of Police Matthew Hamner wants the public to be aware that, “Protecting yourself from such insidious scams requires diligence. I hope you take this seriously. The problem is growing exponentially and can take years to fix.”

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